GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:392
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2007
INCLUSION IN ST LIST
Sarma Dr. Arun Kumar

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Assam had furnished a report in 2005 regarding inclusion of six communities of Assam in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list as required by the Registrar General of India and National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;

(b) whether on earlier occasions the Government of Assam, national Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Registrar General of India, concerned Select Committee and Standing Committee of Parliament also recommended for inclusion of the 'Konch Rajbonshis' and other communities into the ST list;

(c) if so, the details of such recommendations made therein, community-wise and the action taken by the Government so far;

(d) the reason for delay in implementing those recommendations; and

(e) the time by when the said community is likely to be included in the ST list?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS. (P.R. KYNDIAH)
(a) :Yes, Sir. The State Govt. of Assam has in 2005 sent a copy of the report regarding the social status of Koch Rajbongshis, Tai-Ahom, Chutia, Moran, Matak and Tea & Ex-Tea Garden Communities living in Assam,recommending the inclusion of these communities in the Scheduled Tribes list of Assam.

(b),(c)&(d) : In 1993, the State Government of Assam recommended the specification of Koch Rajbongshi as a Scheduled Tribe, but the report appended to the State Government's recommendation was found contradictory and the RGI had rejected the claim. Later, the State Government sent a revised report, on basis of which in 1995 the RGI supported its inclusion in the list, without connecting it with the earlier report.

On 27.1.96, an Ordinance effecting the inclusion of Koch Rajbongshi in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Assam (excluding autonomous districts of Assam) was promulgated. The Ordinance was re-promulgated thrice on 27.3.1996, 27.6.1996 and 9.1.1997 for giving continued effect to the inclusion.The Ordinance lapsed on 2.4.1997. The Constitution (ScheduledTribes) Order, (Amendment) Bil, 1996 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12.7.1996.The aforesaid Bill was referred to the "Select Committee" of the Lok Sabha on 02.08.1996. The Select Committee submitted its report on 14.08.1997.The report of the Select Committee was circulated among the State Government of Assam, the Registrar General of India, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.The Government of Assam and the Registrar General of India had recommended the inclusion of Koch Rajbongshi in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Assam (though in March 1997, the Govt.of Assam had stated that Koch Rajbongshi have been benefited like other sections of the society by the process of development and it will not be correct to say that they have become backward during this period so as to claim status of Scheduled Tribes). But the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes did not favour its specification as a Scheduled Tribe. However, in 2002 the National Commission changed their stand and recommended the inclusion.They also referred the case to RGI for the justification for inclusion, but the RGI rejected the claim of Koch Rajbongshi community.

The RGI has commented eight times (1981, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005 and 20.3.2006) on the proposal for inclusion of Koch Rajbongshi including the above referred reference of 2005 (on 20.3.2006). Similarly, in the case of the other aforecited communities, RGI has rejected the claim for their inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Assam several times.

(e) : As the modalities require consent of the concerned State Government, Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes for modification in the list of Scheduled Tribes and this takes time, therefore, no specific time-frame can be mentioned at present.